

The right to torture-less public services

KPK government's promise to provide time-bound public services, is clearly a step in the right direction. The government wants to be good to its people and lessen the time and the built-in misery of the colonial service-providing processes. These range from obtaining certificates and approval of various kinds to obtaining Zakat money and water connections.

There is however something inherently wrong with this approach, which may well be termed as a sugar-coated version of the same bureaucratic disposition. It is based on the assumption that it is obligatory for citizens to undergo torture, however time-bound, in order to avail a service. The torture is carefully veiled in the large number of visits, the long waiting lines, the indignity of begging for what is needed, the leave taken from work, the money spent on travel and the carbon footprint generated.

Much of this can be avoided if the government pushes for improvement and reform of processes rather than dead-lines. Take for example the 20 days, the indignity and an unknown number of visits required for receiving the Zakat money. This can be easily reduced to zero time and zero visits by using mobile phone money transfer systems.

Visits to government offices must be considered a taboo and visiting an office or a bank for making or receiving a payment must be banned. These time wasting and misery-generating practices have long been given up by the civilised world.

Finally I protest at the mindless and crime-patronising offer of providing arms licenses in 10 days. When will we ever learn that guns can only perform one function – to kill others. Can the government of KPK please reconsider its service delivery promises from a completely different perspective - based on peaceful, torture-less and technology based processes.